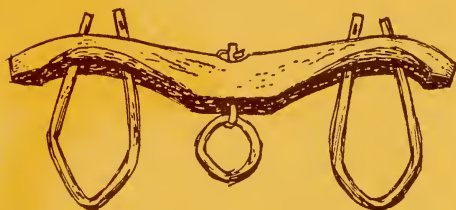


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FOUR LINCOLN FIRSTS

By PAUL M. ANGLE

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FOUR LINCOLN FIRSTS*

By PAUL M. ANGLE

In the preparation of this paper I have been aided most generously by Ernest J. Wessen, Mansfield, Ohio; Daniel H. Newhall, New York; Harold Lancour, Librarian, The Cooper Union Library; Joseph Gavit, Associate Librarian, New York State Library; Gail Curtis, Reference Librarian, Michigan State Library; and Paul North Rice, Chief of the Reference Department, New York Public Library. All undertook extensive research in my behalf, and this note of acknowledgment is far from adequate recognition of their services.

I

Subtreasury Speech, December 26, 1839

IN Illinois, a century ago, politics centered at Springfield. There lived such aggressive leaders as Stephen A. Douglas, John Calhoun, John T. Stuart, E. D. Baker, and Abraham Lincoln, while others equally prominent and mettlesome were frequently attracted to the state capitol by the sessions of the legislature and the courts. Given an occasion, there was certain to be speechmaking, and then as now, speeches got into print.

In the fall of 1839, the time was ripe for political oratory. Martin Van Buren, in the White House, was unpopular, and the Whigs of Illinois were elated by the prospect of toppling him

* Read at the Society's Meeting held in Chicago, December 30, 1941.

from what they were pleased to call his throne. The President, however, had staunch defenders, unafraid to meet his critics in open argument. In November, when a number of leaders of both parties were brought together in Springfield by a court session, a nightly debate of nearly a week's duration took place. A month later, after the opening of the biennial session of the legislature had brought the politicians together again, the performance was repeated. One of the Whig speakers on both occasions was Abraham Lincoln, then serving his third term as a member of the House of Representatives from Sangamon County.

Lincoln's speech in the second debate, delivered on the night of December 26, 1839, was an argument against the subtreasury, presented so effectively that the Whigs decided to print it in pamphlet form and distribute it as a campaign document. It was the first of his speeches to be accorded this distinction. Because of this fact, and because the form in which most collectors have seen it has mystified them, it deserves to be included in this discussion.

The mystery I shall state in the words of a dealer of long experience. I quote from a letter received some years ago:

I have enclosed in your package today a copy of Fish 518 of which I want your opinion. This piece, the last owner told me, came out of John Hay's library, having been presented to him by Thos. J. Henderson.

According to my records you and Governor Horner are the only collectors that have it. It is on the want lists of all the others. Stewart never saw it nor McLellan.

But what is it? Obviously, it was not printed in 1839. Is this Henderson the old time Illinois man who was a Congressman in 1874 when he was 50 years old? And where did he get it? It is on pulp paper which was not used until the middle 80s.

It certainly is a good piece but I suspect it is comparatively modern. If you throw any light on it I will appreciate it.

Light came not from me but from Thomas J. Henderson himself, who had been, as my correspondent surmised, a prominent Illinois Republican congressman. Henderson died in February, 1911. Two months later a sketch of his life was published in the *Journal* of the Illinois State Historical Society.¹ In that sketch sev-

¹ Vol. IV, No. 1, pp. 67-81.

eral paragraphs were quoted from the manuscript of a speech which death had prevented him from delivering on Lincoln's Birthday. There he related that his father — like Lincoln, a Whig member of the Illinois legislature — had been present at the political debate in Springfield in December, 1839. Henderson wrote:

Abraham Lincoln made a speech on the Whig side, replying to Mr. Douglas and Mr. Lamborn, which was of so much ability and force that when the Legislature met, the Whig members had the speech printed in pamphlet form as a campaign document, and when my father came home from Springfield he brought a number of copies of the speech with him, and attracted as I was, by the eloquent peroration of Mr. Lincoln's speech, although but a boy, I preserved a copy of the speech and committed the peroration to memory. . . . Some years ago I brought with me to Washington City the copy of this old speech, which I had preserved and still keep, and at his request, I permitted John G. Nicolay to copy and publish it in one of the last volumes of his and John Hay's life of Lincoln.

If I had not preserved this pamphlet copy of Mr. Lincoln's speech, when a boy, I have good reason to believe the speech would have been lost, for a few years ago at the request of some friends, I had a reprint of the speech made by Gibson & Sons, in Washington, and presented a copy of it to John Hay, then Secretary of State of the United States, and when I did so, I asked him the question, whether he or John Nicolay in their researches for material for the life and speeches of Abraham Lincoln, had found any other copy of the speech than the one I permitted them to copy and publish, and he said, no, they never found any other copy.

Even without Henderson's copy of the original pamphlet, the text of Lincoln's Subtreasury Speech would have been preserved, for it was published in the *Sangamo Journal* before it was issued as a pamphlet. Nevertheless, the original edition is very rare. The Illinois State Historical Library, however, has an uncut copy in its collection. It is a ten-page pamphlet which measures 7 by 9¾ inches, and has the following caption title:

Speech of Mr. Lincoln, | At a Political Discussion, | In the Hall of the House of Representatives, December, 1839. | At Springfield, Illinois.

The Henderson reprint also has ten pages but is somewhat smaller, measuring 6¾ by 9⅜ inches. It too has a caption title, identical with that of the original edition. The paper, however, is wood pulp, and the type much too modern for the year 1839.

Paper and type should enable all except tyros to recognize the reprint for what it is, but for anyone so unsure of himself as to need other means of identification, it may be noted that on p. 10 of the reprint there are 28 lines, instead of 33 as in the original.

II

The "House Divided" Speech

Disdaining strict accuracy, we may say, with Alexandre Dumas, "twenty years after." It is the night of the 16th of June, 1858, and Abraham Lincoln is about to address the members of the Republican State Convention, who that afternoon had selected him as the man in the party most likely to defeat Stephen A. Douglas for election to the United States Senate. The crowd in the Hall of the House of Representatives listens intently as he begins slowly and with emphasis:

If we could first know *where* we are, and *whither* we are tending, we could then better judge *what* to do, and *how* to do it.

We are now far into the *fifth* year, since a policy was initiated, with the *avowed* object, and *confident* promise, of putting an end to slavery agitation.

Under the operation of that policy, that agitation has not only, *not ceased*, but has *constantly augmented*.

In *my* opinion, it *will* not cease, until a *crisis* shall have been reached, and passed.

Then came the paraphrase² which furnished the title by which the speech has ever since been known: "A house divided against itself cannot stand."

It was a bold speech and a good speech, and because of its prediction of certain strife, it aroused as much controversy as anything Abraham Lincoln ever said. For these reasons the identification of the first separate publication of the speech would be a matter of interest. But there is an additional reason for establishing the original text. In Lincoln's published writings the "House

² "If a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand." Mark. III, 25.

Divided" speech is printed in straight roman type, and divided into orthodox paragraphs. In all contemporary printings, on the other hand, the text is heavily italicized and set in very short paragraphs. The effect of the two different typographical styles upon a reader is materially different. Which conveys the impression Lincoln desired?

Very soon after the adjournment of the convention, its proceedings were published by the proprietors of the *Illinois State Journal*. This pamphlet, octavo,³ with twelve pages, has this cover title:

Proceedings | of the | Republican State Convention, | held at | Springfield,
Illinois, | June 16, 1858. | [Ornamental rule] | Springfield: | Bailhache & Baker,
Printers.

Except for the cover, three short paragraphs on p. 9, and half a column on p. 12, all type used in this pamphlet was lifted from the June 17 and June 18 issues of the *Illinois State Journal*—the convention proceedings from the issue of the 17th, the speeches of Lincoln and Gustave Koerner from that of the next day. The use of the newspaper type distinguishes this from a second edition which has the same title and the same general appearance, but which was completely reset. One may assume, I think, that the publishers, anticipating no extraordinary demand, distributed the type after one printing, and then found that there was a large enough market to justify another edition. Fortunately, for purposes of easy identification, the typesetters had difficulty with the word "Springfield" in the title of both editions. In the first, they spelled it "Springfied" in the next to the last line; in the second, it was spelled "Spingfield" in the fifth line. Typographical errors have their uses.

Among those in attendance at the Republican State Convention was C. W. Waite, editor of *The True Republican* of Sycamore, De Kalb County, Illinois. Waite was impressed by the convention,

³ The Illinois State Historical Library has three copies of this pamphlet, all uncut. They measure, in inches: $6\frac{3}{8} \times 9\frac{3}{4}$, $6\frac{1}{4} \times 10\frac{1}{8}$, and $7\frac{1}{2} \times 10\frac{1}{4}$.

and ran a four-column account of it in the first issue of his paper to be published after his return home—that for June 22.⁴ In that account is this sentence:

As Mr. Lincoln's speech was phonographically reported, we shall attempt to give no abstract of it this week, but will present it entire to our readers in our next issue.

True to its promise, *The True Republican* for June 29, 1858, carried the text of Lincoln's speech. With it appeared this editorial endorsement:

Of course every Republican will carefully read the speech of Hon. Abram Lincoln, which we publish in another column. It was reported phonographically, with all the emphases which the distinguished speaker made accurately marked. As we glance over the emphasized portions, every gesture is vividly recalled to our mind, and the convincing and earnest tones again ring in our ear.

Perhaps the demand for copies of the paper containing Lincoln's speech outran the supply; perhaps it was simply Waite's enthusiasm that led him to lift the type from his issue of June 29 and print Lincoln's speech separately in a sextodecimo pamphlet of 16 pages. Whatever the reason, the honor of issuing the first exclusive publication of one of Lincoln's greatest speeches must go to him and to the Sycamore *True Republican*.⁵

Here is the full title—a cover title—of one of the very rarest items in Lincolniana:

Speech | of | Hon. Abram Lincoln, | Before the | Republican State Convention, | June 16, 1858. | "The result is not doubtful. We shall not fail—if | we stand firm, we shall not fail." | [Rule] | Sycamore. | O. P. Bassett, Pr., True Republican Office | 1858.

Comparison of texts poses an interesting question. The *True Republican* text is inferior to that of the *Proceedings*—on p. 4 of the former two paragraphs are transposed, on p. 10 two lines are dropped out, and not quite so many words are italicized. Even so,

⁴ *The True Republican* was a weekly.

⁵ The edition of the "House Divided" speech brought out by the Albany *Evening Journal*—*Evening Journal Tracts No. 7*—was published during the campaign of 1860. The text of that pamphlet is something of a mystery. In italics, it is identical with the *Proceedings*, but there are important and unaccountable variations in language.

in paragraphing and italics the degree of similarity between the two texts is too great to be accidental. One must conclude, with Douglas C. McMurtrie,⁶ that the compositor who set the *True Republican* type had before him either a copy of the *Illinois State Journal* for June 18, 1858, or one of the *Proceedings* pamphlets.

Yet Waite insisted that the speech was “phonographically”—that is, stenographically—reported, and certainly led his readers to believe that he printed it from a shorthand record. On the other hand, William H. Herndon stated that Lincoln wrote the “House Divided” speech

on stray envelopes and scraps of paper, as ideas suggested themselves, putting them into that miscellaneous and convenient receptacle, his hat. As the convention drew near he copied the whole on connected sheets, carefully revising every line and sentence, and fastened them together, for reference during the delivery of the speech, and for publication.⁷

Horace White was even more explicit:

I sat a short distance from Mr. Lincoln when he delivered the “house-divided-against-itself” speech, on the 17th of June. This was delivered from manuscript, and was the only one I ever heard him deliver in that way. When it was concluded he put the manuscript in my hands and asked me to go to the *State Journal* office and read the proof of it. I think it had already been set in type. Before I had finished this task Mr. Lincoln himself came into the composing room of the *State Journal* and looked over the revised proofs. He said to me that he had taken a great deal of pains with this speech, and that he wanted it to go before the people just as he had prepared it.⁸

Here, apparently, is contradiction, one man asserting that the speech was printed from a stenographic report, others that it was printed from manuscript copy. The differences between the *True Republican* and *Illinois State Journal* texts are slight, but in view of Lincoln’s insistence that the speech be printed accurately, the truth of the matter is worth establishing.

⁶ “*A House Divided Against Itself Cannot Stand*” By Abraham Lincoln The Text of This Celebrated Speech as Originally Written, Paragraphed, Italicized & Proofread by its Author, Printed in its Entirety for the First Time since its Contemporary Publication. With an Introduction by Douglas C. McMurtrie. Chicago and New York, 1936.

⁷ W. H. Herndon. *Life of Lincoln*, New York, 1930, p. 324.

⁸ Herndon & Weik. *Abraham Lincoln, The True Story of a Great Life*, New York, 1893, II, p. 92.

On reflection, there appears to be no real contradiction. The proceedings of the convention were reported stenographically. That we know. Waite, therefore, undoubtedly saw a stenographer at work, perhaps saw him taking notes while Lincoln was speaking. In all probability, he assumed that the *Journal's* report of the speech came from these notes. He was simply mistaken.

III

The Cooper Union Address

Students of Lincoln's life are agreed that his address at Cooper Institute on February 27, 1860, was essential to his nomination for the Presidency. Without the favorable impression that he created on that occasion, it is unlikely that his aspirations would have been taken seriously. And of major importance in creating that impression were the thousands of pamphlet copies of his speech distributed after its delivery. A study of those pamphlets, therefore, is of historical as well as bibliographical importance.

The *New York Tribune*, most influential newspaper in the country, printed Lincoln's speech in full in its issue for February 28, 1860. In that same issue appeared an editorial, presumably by Horace Greeley, praising the speech and speaker in glowing terms:

The Speech of ABRAHAM LINCOLN at the Cooper Institute last evening was one of the happiest and most convincing political arguments ever made in this City, and was addressed to a crowded and most appreciating audience. Since the days of Clay and Webster, no man has spoken to a larger assemblage of the intellect and mental culture of our City. Mr. Lincoln is one of Nature's orators, using his rare powers solely and effectively to elucidate and to convince, though their inevitable effect is to delight and electrify as well. We present herewith a very full and accurate report of this Speech; yet the tones, the gestures, the kindling eye and the mirth provoking look, defy the reporter's skill. The vast assemblage frequently rang with cheers and shouts of applause, which were prolonged and intensified at the close. No man ever before made such an impression on his first appeal to a New-York audience. . . .

We shall soon issue his Speech of last night in pamphlet form for cheap circulation.

In this same issue of the *New York Tribune* appeared an advertisement which had been running since February 21—an advertisement of *The Tribune Campaign Tracts*. Listed were No. 1, William H. Seward's "Irrepressible Conflict" Speech; and No. 2, Henry Wilson's speech entitled, "Democratic Leaders for Disunion." Unnumbered, but advertised as available, was Cassius M. Clay's speech at Cooper Institute, February 17, 1860; while it was also announced that orders for Helper's *Impending Crisis* could be filled on the day of receipt.

On March 1 this notice, which was kept standing for months, was enlarged by the addition of No. 3—Seward's speech of February 29, 1860, in the U. S. Senate. On March 6 it was enlarged again—this time with the announcement of No. 4—"Speech of Abraham Lincoln of Illinois, delivered at the Cooper Institute." An editorial in the same issue contained this statement: "The Speech of ABRAHAM LINCOLN of Illinois, at the Cooper Institute in this City . . . has just been issued in pamphlet form on large type at this office. . . ." (Dealers please note: price was 4¢ a single copy, 25¢ per dozen, \$1.25 per 100, \$10.00 per 1,000.)

The *New York Tribune*, therefore, had Lincoln's Cooper Union Speech in pamphlet form on sale just eight days after its delivery.

But what of other editions of the speech, issued by other publishers? At least a dozen editions were printed in 1860. Not long ago, when I asked a veteran bookman for his opinion about them, his reply was: "Which of these was the first is anybody's guess."

The guessing, however, can be very greatly restricted. The contents or imprints of several prove that they were published after Lincoln's nomination. They, therefore, are eliminated as possibilities. Moreover, the publication dates of most of those which remain can be established definitely or approximately.

Closest in time to Tribune Tract No. 4 was probably the *Chicago Press & Tribune's* edition with the title, *Press & Tribune Document No. 1*. This paper printed Lincoln's speech in its issue of March 2, 1860, and praised it editorially. On March 9 it an-

nounced, under the heading, "Press and Tribune Documents for 1860": "We shall immediately issue in pamphlet form the two MOST EFFECTIVE political documents of the year—the speeches of Abraham Lincoln at the Cooper Institute, New York, and of William H. Seward in the Senate of the United States. . . ." I have not been able to establish the exact date of publication, but even if the pamphlet came out within a day or two, it was later than Tribune Tract No. 4 by several days.

In Lincoln's home, the *Illinois State Journal* printed the Cooper Union Address on March 3. On March 13 it ran this notice under the heading, "Campaign Documents": "We shall shortly issue a revised pamphlet edition of Mr. LINCOLN's Great New York Speech, printed with large type and on good paper. Also Mr. Seward's late speech in the United States Senate. . . ." Although this notice headed the city column, which was devoted to live local news and was changed daily, it was kept standing until April 3, and then dropped. Not until April 24 did the following notice appear, also at the head of the city column:

JOURNAL CAMPAIGN DOCUMENTS

NO. 1.

A vindication of the principles of the Republican party, embraced in the speech of Abraham Lincoln, delivered in Cooper Institute, New York City, Feb. 27, 1860. Now ready.

Evening Journal Tract No. 5, the *Albany Evening Journal's* pamphlet edition of the Cooper Union Address, was published at about the same time. Tract No. 2, Seward's speech of February 29, was advertised at the paper's masthead on and after March 8, but the notice was not enlarged to include Tract No. 5—Lincoln's speech—until April 23. Another newspaper publication of the speech—Detroit Tribune Tract No. 5—came at least weeks later. The *Detroit Tribune* did not publish Lincoln's speech in its news columns until May 28, and an editorial reference in the same issue proves that at that date the paper had it available in no other form.

Only one other edition of the Cooper Union Address can be considered as a possible contestant of Tribune Tract No. 4's claim to primacy.⁹ That is a sixteen-page octavo pamphlet with the following cover title:

The Republican Party Vindicated —The Demands | of the South Explained.
| [Rule] | Speech | of | Hon. Abraham Lincoln, | of Illinois, | at the | Cooper
Institute | New York City. | [Rule] | Washington: | 1860.

In addition to the text of the address, this pamphlet contains a reporter's account of the extemporaneous speeches made at the meeting by Horace Greeley, James W. Nye, James A. Briggs, and Judge Culver.

While the *New York Tribune* was the source of most printings of the Cooper Union Address, the text of *The Republican Party Vindicated* came from the *New York Herald*, which published Lincoln's speech in full in its issue for February 28. The *Tribune* and *Herald* versions, moreover, vary in several particulars. Most of the variations are of little consequence, but two are important. Between the second and third sentences in the paragraph beginning, "To enumerate. . ." as the speech is printed in *The Complete Works of Abraham Lincoln*, V, p. 301, *The Republican Party Vindicated* (*Herald* text) has this sentence: "He was a Georgian, too." It also has this passage after the sentence, "The elections came, and your expectations were not quite fulfilled," V, p. 315: "You did not sweep New York, and New Jersey, and Wisconsin, and Minnesota, precisely like fire sweeps over the prairie in high wind. You are still drumming at this idea. Go on with it. If you think you can, by slandering a woman, make her love you, or by villifying a man make him vote with you, go on and try it." The passage was punctuated, if the reporter is to be believed, with "laughter," and "boisterous laughter and prolonged applause."

This text, moreover, was the one used by the Republican Exec-

⁹ I am not ignoring *New-Yorker Demokrat Flugblatt No. 4* — a German translation of the Cooper Union Address. The fact that the other titles in the series were identical with those of the Tribune Tracts indicates that all were German translations of the *New York Tribune* campaign documents. I have been unable to locate a file of the *New-Yorker Demokrat*.

utive Congressional Committee in the edition of the Cooper Union Speech which it published and circulated. It was also used in the party pamphlet that contains the speech of John Hickman, July 24, 1860, in addition to Lincoln's address. The fact that both these pamphlets also have the title, *The Republican Party Vindicated—The Demands of the South Explained*, which was used, I think, in no other edition, may mean that all three were published at about the same time. If that is the case, the first Washington edition undoubtedly came out after Lincoln's nomination. On the other hand, the use of the same title may be without significance as far as the date of publication is concerned. The best reason for assigning priority to Tribune Tract No. 4 lies in the fact that in 1860, New York and Washington were at least a day apart as far as mail was concerned. Presumably, the *New York Tribune* got out Tribune Tract No. 4 as soon as possible after the delivery of Lincoln's speech. If *The Republican Party Vindicated* was also issued as soon as possible, it would have been at least a day later.

The textual differences between the three Washington pamphlets and all others raise the question of the correct text of the address. According to Lincoln's own statement,¹⁰ Tribune Tract No. 4 was published without supervision on his part, but Journal Campaign Document No. 1—the Springfield publication—had the benefit of his own "hasty supervising." The text of the latter, however, is identical with the former; the only differences are in spelling and capitalization. However, the Nott-Brainerd edition, published by The Young Men's Republican Union of New York, differs from all earlier editions in one important respect—the correction of a factual statement—and in several minor matters of phraseology. Because Lincoln read the proofs of this edition,¹¹

¹⁰ Lincoln to Charles C. Nott, Springfield, May 31, 1860. Gilbert A. Tracy. *Uncollected Letters of Abraham Lincoln*, pp. 149-51.

¹¹ *The Address of the Hon. Abraham Lincoln . . . With Notes by Charles C. Nott & Cephas Brainerd*. New York, 1860. The Editors' Preface is dated September, 1860. A facsimile reprint of this pamphlet, with an added Introduction and the Nott-Lincoln correspondence, was published in 1907.

and carried on a correspondence with one of its editors, this is the authoritative text. Fortunately, in the case of the Cooper Union Address, the editors of Lincoln's writings departed from their customary practice of following the poorest possible version. Both Nicolay & Hay and Lapsley adhered to the Nott-Brainerd text—the latter even to the reproduction of italics.

IV

The Gettysburg Address

Beyond question, Lincoln's greatest speech—perhaps the greatest speech in the English language—is the Gettysburg Address.

Collectors have generally agreed that the Gettysburg Address was first put into print, aside from the newspapers, in a 48-page booklet entitled *An Oration Delivered on the Battlefield of Gettysburg . . .*, by Edward Everett, published by Baker & Godwin, New York, 1863, although two Boston publications¹² have had some stout champions. But one of the fascinations of bibliography comes from the possibility that at any time a new discovery may overturn accepted beliefs. Such a discovery was provided by the Lincoln Collection of the late Governor Henry Horner, which is now a valued possession of the Illinois State Historical Library.

In this collection is a 16-page pamphlet, uncut, unopened, measuring 7 by 10 1/2 inches, with the following cover title:

The Gettysburg Solemnities. | [Double rule] | Dedication | of | The National Cemetery | at | Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, | November 19, 1863, | with the | Oration of Hon. Edward Everett, | Speech of President Lincoln, | &c., &c., &c. | [Ornamental rule] | Published at the Washington Chronicle Office.

This pamphlet contains a description of the Gettysburg battlefield, an account of the activities at Gettysburg on November 18

¹² *Address of His Excellency John A. Andrew, to the Two Branches of the Legislature of Massachusetts, January 8, 1864*, Boston, 1864, and *Addresses of Hon. Edward Everett, at the consecration of the National Cemetery at Gettysburg . . .*, Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1864.

and 19, the text of the short speech which Lincoln delivered there on the evening of the 18th, Edward Everett's address, and Lincoln's speech of dedication. Except for a few column inches, the pamphlet was printed from type lifted from the issues of the *Washington Chronicle* for November 18, 19, 20, and 21. Included in the newly set material was the text of Lincoln's speech—the one feature of the pamphlet that gives it distinction.

(Curiously, the *Washington Chronicle* failed to publish Lincoln's speech in its daily issues. Everett's oration was printed in the issue for November 20; in that of the following day appeared dispatches describing the ceremonies and concluding: "The President then delivered his address; which, though short, glittered with gems, evincing the gentleness and goodness of heart peculiar to him, and will receive the attention and command the admiration of all the tens of thousands who will read it.")

When newspaper type has been used for a separate publication, one may safely assume that the separate publication was issued with little delay. In this case, however, we need not rely on assumptions. In the *Washington Chronicle* for November 20 appeared this notice: "Edward Everett's Great Oration and the Proceedings of the Dedication of the National Cemetery at Gettysburg, will be issued tomorrow in pamphlet form.—For Sale at the CHRONICLE OFFICE." On the next day the same notice appeared without change. Since that was the day—November 21—when the *Chronicle* merely mentioned Lincoln's speech, I think we may assume that the publication of the pamphlet was held up until the text of his address was available. If this assumption is correct, the pamphlet was not published before November 22, but there can be little doubt that it was issued then, or, at the latest, a day or two afterward. Certainly it appeared long before the carefully printed, 48-page booklet which has heretofore been credited with first publication.

Now, having, as I believe, identified the true first printing of the Gettysburg Address, I regret the necessity of pointing out the

fact that the text to be found in *The Gettysburg Solemnities* is a faulty one. Here it is:

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are now on a great battle-field of that war. We are met to dedicate a portion of that field as the final resting-place of those who have given their last life-blood that that nation might live. But in a larger sense we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men living and dead who struggled here have consecrated it far above our poor power to add to or detract. [Applause.] The world will little know nor long remember what we say; but it can never forget what they did here. [Applause.] And it is for us living to be dedicated here to the unfinished work that they have thus far so nobly carried forward. [Applause.] It is rather for us here to be dedicated to the great task remaining before us, that from this honored day we take increased devotion to that cause for which they here gave the last full measure of devotion. That we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that the nation shall, under God, have a new birth of freedom. [Applause.] And that government of the people, by the people, and for the people, shall not perish from the earth. [Applause.]

Note that the sentence, "It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this," is omitted. The other differences between this and the accepted text will be readily apparent to every reader.

The textual deficiencies of this version of the Gettysburg Address lead one to ask when the accepted text was first printed. Before that question can be answered we must ask another: What is the accepted text? The answer is not so simple as one would think.

In *Abraham Lincoln: A History*,¹³ Nicolay and Hay present a version taken, according to their footnote, from an autograph copy of the address dated November 19, 1863. The text, however, is not that of Lincoln's first draft, nor is it that of the fair copy which he made on the morning of November 19.¹⁴ In an

¹³ VIII, p. 202.

¹⁴ The five extant manuscript copies of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address are printed in facsimile in William E. Barton. *Lincoln at Gettysburg*, Indianapolis, 1930, and Charles Moore. *Lincoln's Gettysburg Address and Second Inaugural*, Boston and New York, 1927.

article entitled, *Lincoln's Gettysburg Address*,¹⁵ John G. Nicolay undertook to show how the "authentic text" of the address—by which he meant the one printed in *Abraham Lincoln: A History*—was established. He related that soon after Lincoln's return from Gettysburg, David Wills, who had arranged the dedication, asked the President for a copy of his remarks.

To comply with this request [Nicolay wrote], the President reexamined his original draft, and the version which had appeared in the newspapers, and saw that, because of the variations between them, the first seemed incomplete, and the others imperfect. By his direction, therefore, his secretaries made copies of the Associated Press report as it was printed in several prominent newspapers. Comparing these with his original draft, and with his own fresh recollection of the form in which he delivered it, he made a new autograph copy—a careful and deliberate revision—which has become the standard and authentic text.

So Nicolay said. But if this "careful and deliberate revision" was ever sent to Wills, the latter failed to use it in the official account of the ceremonies—the Little, Brown and Company publication of 1864. There the text appears to be that of the *New York Tribune*, with two variations which probably resulted from typesetters' carelessness or editorial meddling. Moreover, the manuscript which Nicolay described is not known to exist, so if Lincoln really intended it to be the official version, we shall probably never know exactly how he wanted his greatest speech preserved for posterity.

Actually, I think we do know exactly how Lincoln wanted his speech preserved. In February, 1864, George Bancroft asked for a copy of the address in order that it might be included in a volume of facsimiles entitled, *Autograph Leaves of our Country's Authors*. Lincoln complied, but because he wrote on both sides of the paper, his manuscript was not suitable for reproduction. At Bancroft's request he sent a second copy on March 11, 1864, this time writing only on one side of the sheets. This copy was duly reproduced in the book for which it was intended, which was published by Cushings & Bailey, Baltimore, 1864. As far as is known, this was Lincoln's final revision.

¹⁵ *Century Magazine*, February, 1894, pp. 596-608.

Verbally, this is the text which Nicolay & Hay printed in *Abraham Lincoln: A History*. There, however, they set it in one instead of three paragraphs, and failed to follow exactly Lincoln's punctuation and capitalization. When they printed the speech in the *Complete Works of Abraham Lincoln*, they took more editorial liberties. This time they followed Lincoln's own paragraphing, but "four score" was rendered "fourscore," "can not" was changed to "cannot," several commas were omitted, and three dashes were changed to semicolons. Arthur Brooks Lapsley, in the Federal Edition of *The Works of Abraham Lincoln*, New York and London, 1906, VII, p. 20, did much better. Had he only put a comma after the first "nation" in the sixth line of the text and a period at the end of the twenty-first line, he would have achieved complete accuracy. These variations, of course, are of small importance, but when editors have before them a text which the author has revised with care, there can be no excuse for any departure from it.

Now to answer the questions which precipitated this digression: The accepted text of the Gettysburg Address is that which Lincoln prepared for *Autograph Leaves of our Country's Authors*, and it was first published, but only in facsimile, in that book. In type, a wholly accurate text is not to be found in any of the standard compilations of Lincoln's writings.

Throughout this paper I have emphasized, perhaps unduly, the comparison of texts. The emphasis, however, has been deliberate. That we have no reliable edition of Lincoln's writings is a standing reproach to American scholarship. The fact that the editorial shortcomings which Lincoln's published works exhibit resulted from carelessness and lax standards rather than from intent does not mitigate the misfortune. The greatest need in all Lincolniana is an inclusive, scholarly edition of Lincoln's writings. And textual accuracy is bibliography's greatest potential contribution to that end.



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